United Nations A/58/PV.90

General Assembly

Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

90th plenary meeting
Thursday, 10 June 2004, 11.55 a.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 11.55 a.m.

Announcement regarding the results of the election of the Chairmen of the Main Committees

The President: I should like to inform members that the following representatives have been elected Chairmen of the six Main Committees of the General Assembly for its fifty-ninth session and are accordingly members of the General Committee for that session:

First Committee, Mr. Luis Alfonso De Alba (Mexico);

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe (Myanmar);

Second Committee, Mr. Marco Balarezo (Peru);

Third Committee, Mr. Valery Kuchinsky (Ukraine);

Fifth Committee, Mr. Don MacKay (New Zealand);

Sixth Committee, Mr. Mohamed Bennouna (Morocco).

I congratulate the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the General Assembly for its fifty-ninth session on their election.

Agenda item 6

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

The President: In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, as amended by resolution 56/509 of 8 July 2002, we shall now proceed to the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for its fifty-ninth session.

All members of the General Assembly are eligible in this election except those already represented in the General Committee, namely, those countries whose representatives have been elected to the presidency of the General Assembly or to the chairmanships of the Main Committees for the fifty-ninth session.

In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the annex to resolution 33/138 of 19 December 1978, the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for its fifty-ninth session shall be elected according to the following pattern: five representatives from African States; five representatives from Asian States; one representative from an Eastern European State; three representatives from Latin American and Caribbean States; two representatives from Western European and other States; and representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

In accordance with paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be

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dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled. We shall proceed accordingly.

I shall now read out the names of the endorsed candidates.

African States: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Ghana and Zambia.

Asian States: Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Uzbekistan.

Eastern European States: Azerbaijan.

Latin American and Caribbean States: Antigua and Barbuda, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Western European and other States: Australia and Belgium.

Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, I declare those candidates elected, in addition to the representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The following States have thus been elected to vice-presidencies of the General Assembly for its fifty-ninth session: Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Djibouti, El Salvador, France, Ghana, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uzbekistan and Zambia.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the States that have been elected Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the fifty-ninth session.

With the Chairmen of the six Main Committees and the 21 Vice-Presidents elected for the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the General Committee of the General Assembly for the fifty-ninth session has thus been fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

Agenda item 169

International Year of Physics, 2005

Draft resolution (A/58/L.62)

The President: I call on the representative of Lesotho to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.62.

Mr. Moleko (Lesotho): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Brazil, France, Portugal, the Principality of Monaco, Singapore, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and my own country, Lesotho, in order to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.62, entitled "International Year of Physics, 2005".

In 1905, Albert Einstein, then working at the patent office in Bern, Switzerland, published several scientific articles which profoundly influenced our understanding of the universe we live in. He introduced utterly revolutionary ideas on fundamental questions such as the existence of atoms, the nature of light and the concepts of time and space, energy and matter. He thus opened the way to most of the twentieth-century developments of physics.

Last year, at the initiative of the European Society of Physics and the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adapted a resolution proclaiming 2005, the hundredth anniversary of those great scientific achievements, the International Year of physics. Furthermore, in that resolution, the States members of UNESCO asked the General Assembly to do the same.

The aim of the International Year goes beyond the mere celebration of one of the greatest minds in physics of the twentieth century. The Year will provide the world with an opportunity for the largest possible audience to acknowledge the progress and the importance of this great field of science. One will remember that, for example, transistors, computers, lasers and magnetic resonance imagery are pure products of recent decades of fundamental research in physics laboratories, where tomorrow's materials and information technologies are worked out today.

We can stimulate the interest of young people to pursue scientific careers and revive in them a taste for the scientific approach: this must be a national as well

as a worldwide endeavour. It is indeed essential to understand that the twenty-first century will have an increasing need for the concepts and the tools provided by the physical sciences in finding solutions to major problems that confront us, such as energy production, environmental protection and even public health.

The international year of physics should also be an occasion to begin a prospective debate on the great need for scientific research in the twenty-first century. The spectacular accomplishments of the past 10 years towards the infinitely small of particles, the infinitely large of the cosmos and the infinitely complex of the states of matter bring fascinating prospects to science as a whole. The history of the sciences teaches us to remember and appreciate that there are always great enigmas in the fundamental laws of the universe of matter, of life as well as the human mind and that the twenty-first century will undoubtedly bring about many scientific surprises.

The debates will also have to relate to all the social issues that accompany the practice of science in general and of physics in particular. It is essential to better evaluate its role in the general culture of humankind. If one measures the impact of the physical sciences on the development of new technologies, one will undoubtedly recognise its importance for the necessary progress of the developing countries. In this respect, the ethical responsibilities of physicists are enormous as well as challenging. The international year of physics will allow all practitioners — especially women, who are still largely excluded from this field of research — to participate more actively in its advancement. Political leaders will have to be convinced of the paramount importance of research in physics for the advancement of mankind. The spirit of this celebration is thus directly linked to the Millennium Development Goals.

Countries around the world are preparing special events to celebrate the international year of physics under the sponsorship of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The launching of the year will take place at UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 13 to 15 January 2005.

Already, more than 60 countries in Africa, in Asia, in the Pacific, in Latin America, in North America, in Europe and in the Middle East have started to establish their programmes for the celebrations. These programmes are financed by public and scientific institutions, as well as by private sponsors. Some of the topics to be discussed are the promotion of physics to populations, physics in teaching, physics as the basis of many disciplines and of new scientific and technical developments, the great challenges of the twenty-first century, physics in developing countries and physics for development, and women and physics.

If the General Assembly should declare 2005 the international year of physics, it would strengthen the scope of these celebrations and these discussions. It is not often that physics or anything to do with physics is discussed in this Hall. It is a privilege for me to introduce this draft resolution for the Assembly's support and I would urge members to adopt it by acclamation.

Finally, I want to announce that Croatia and Saint Kitts and Nevis have joined the list of co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/58/L.62.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/58/L.62 was adopted (resolution 58/293).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 169?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Draft resolution (A/58/L.63)

The President: As indicated in the footnote to document A/58/L.63, in order for the General Assembly to take action on the draft resolution, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 94, "Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 94?

It was so decided.

The President: Members will recall that, at its second plenary meeting on 19 September 2003, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (d) of agenda item 94 to the Second Committee.

In order for the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the draft resolution, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider sub-item (d) of agenda item 94 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 94?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 94 (*continued*)

Environment and sustainable development

(d) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Draft resolution (A/58/L.63)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/58/L.63.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/58/L.63 was adopted (resolution 58/213 B).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 94?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.